The Old Paths

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"A Beautiful Death"

Jarrod Jacobs

As we observe nature during this time of year, many will remark that the leaves are beautiful right now. The many colors certainly attract our attention, and we note the beauty that is all around us. Such beauty is yet more evidence of a Creator. Yet, do we ever stop to consider the fact that this beauty is due to the fact that the leaves are, in fact, dying? God made trees with the ability to shed leaves so that the tree itself might live through winter, living off of the sugars and nutrients it has stored up during the spring and summer.

As I have also marveled at the beauty of this time of year, and considered the facts concerning the trees shedding their leaves, my thoughts turned to spiritual matters….

We Are All Dying

It has been said that life is a "terminal disease". This is because once man is born, he begins to die! In fact, *"the living know that they will die"* (Ecc. 9:5). The Holy Spirit spoke about death and said, *"just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment"* (Heb. 9:27). In fact, every day brings us closer to our final day upon earth. To the Roman Christians, Paul stated this fact by telling them, *"salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed"* (Rom. 13:11). Who knows, today may be your last day (Prov. 27:1)!

How Are You Dying?

While we cannot always control the manner of our death, or the time of our death, we can control how we act until that time comes (I Cor. 9:27)! On one occasion, God called the death of His saints *"precious"* (Ps. 116:15). From the book of Revelation, we read, *"'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!'"* (Rev. 14:13).

Please note that the reason why certain ones' deaths can be described as *"precious"*, and the reason why some die a *"blessed"* death, is because of how they lived! Friend, how are you dying? Are you dying with bitterness, evil-speaking, dishonesty, and a life away from the Father? Or, are you dying *"in the Lord"* (Rev. 14:13)? Are you dying with the Lord as your shepherd (Ps. 23)?

Conclusion

The beauty of nature around us is clearly seen, even as the leaves slowly die. Spiritually, what beauty are we adding to this world while we die? More than this, are you ready to leave this world, should that happen today? Paul wrote, *"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is it hand"* (II Tim. 4:6). Can we say the same? Do folks look at us and see a beautiful death?

"Pity The Poor Preacher"

Unknown

He had just completed a scorcher on the evil and sin in using foul language. He stated several times that he knew one of his hearers was guilty. The service ended and he stood at the door greeting each person as he left the building.

The first to go was a woman no one would ever suspect of using foul language. Red-faced and angry she exclaimed, "I'll never set foot in this building again!" Before the preacher could gather his wits over that one, another said, "If I had known you were that near last week I would have been more careful." And still another said, "At least you could have told me privately." A fourth said, "Well, I was never so embarrassed in all my life."

Then came the guilty party. He pumped the preacher's hand heartily and with an innocent smile said, "Now, that's what I call preaching. You sure poured it on 'em today!"

"A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pew"

"Evidence That Jesus Cares For You"

Jarrod Jacobs

We live in a time in which few people seem to care for us. David knew this feeling, and wrote on one occasion, *"I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul"* (Ps. 142:4). In contrast, we read Peter's words, reminding us of the care Christ has for us: *"casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you"* (I Pet. 5:7). Yet, how can we see evidence of Christ's care for us? Let us look first at His care for others while He walked the earth.

At Lazarus' Tomb

A very well-known passage is the statement, *"Jesus wept"* (Jn. 11:35). Do we remember the context in which this statement was made? Jesus wept while standing at the tomb of Lazarus! He cared for Lazarus and his family. Even though He knew He would soon raise Lazarus, He expressed his care and compassion for them by first weeping at Lazarus' tomb.

At The Cross

We know that Jesus cares for us because of His great sacrifice upon the cross (Rom. 5:8). Before His death, Jesus made the statement, *"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends"* (Jn. 15:13). Truly, Jesus did this when He died upon the cross to be the great sacrifice for man's sin. The *"lamb of God"* took away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29). Yet, unlike a literal lamb who was chosen and taken as a sacrifice without his consent, and killed in Old Testament days, Jesus said, *"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it up again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again"* (Jn. 10:17-18; cf. Matt. 26:53-56). Truly, it is evident that Christ cares for us when we see the extent of His sacrifice that He willingly made for us!

At Revealing How We Can Be Saved.

Christ's care is seen when we read of the Lord's plan for salvation (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). Our Lord wants us to be saved from sin and live with Him in Heaven one day. Therefore, He cares enough to tell us what to do to be saved and have a right relationship with Him. Read I Peter 5:7 again, and remember that these words were written to Christians. Christ wants our care or anxiety to be cast upon Him; not some, or part of it, but "all" of it! How many today would look to their fellow-man and say, "Please give me all your cares, concerns, and worries, because I care for you"? None! Yet, Jesus Christ, the son of the living God wants "all" our care "cast" upon Him, and He means it! Men may disappoint us, but Christ never will! He loves and cares for us. This fact has been proven again and again.

Conclusion

These are but a few examples of Christ's care for us. In learning this great truth, let us also remember that the Bible says we are to walk in His steps (I Pet. 2:21-22). Therefore, since we are the recipients of Christ's care, let us now go and show that same care to others! Again, the Bible shows us that we are to speak and act according to what the Lord has authorized (permitted, Col. 3:17). Friend, who has been the recipient of our care for them (Matt. 25:31-44)? How many can say they have seen "Christ in us" (Gal. 2:20) by the care we have shown them? (cf. Matt. 5:16) Think about it! Christ shows us how to act toward others. How are we doing in following His example?

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Faith Without Works Is A Farce.

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